



University of Toronto
FACULTY OF MUSIC

ORFORD STRING QUARTET

ANDREW DAWES, *violin*

TERENCE HELMER, *viola*

KENNETH PERKINS, *violin*

MARCEL ST-CYR, *cello*

STANLEY McCARTNEY, CLARINET

Concert Hall, Edward Johnson Building

SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 1970 AT 8:30 P.M.

PROGRAMME

QUARTET in F minor, Opus 95

BEETHOVEN

Allegro con brio

Allegretto ma non troppo

Allegro assai vivace ma serio

Larghetto espressivo — Allegro agitato

Written between May and October, 1810, this work remained unpublished until 1816. In fact only one year separates this quartet from the E flat Quartet, Opus 74. It is dedicated to Beethoven's close friend, the amateur 'cellist, Zmeskall. In the manuscript Beethoven called this, the shortest of his works in the medium, a *Quartett serioso*.

The opening *Allegro con brio* begins with a unison announcement of the principal subject on all four instruments. The terse, initial five-note motive of this theme occurs repeatedly throughout the movement and most strikingly in the coda. The second subject is first presented in D flat major, rather than the A flat that traditional sonata form would lead one to expect. There is a development section of surprising brevity and concision, dealing only with first subject material.

D major is the ostensible tonality of the subsequent *Allegretto*, but Beethoven alternates between the major and minor sixth degree, B flat and B natural, and two *fugato* sections built on a shifting, chromatic subject further veil the tonality. The descending chords with which the movement ends affirm D major, but a sudden leap to a diminished seventh chord leads without break into the F minor Scherzo. This movement, marked both "lively" and "serious", is built on a dotted figure of considerable urgency. The Trio provides seriousness of a different sort. Here a chorale-like passage on the three lower instruments unfolds to which arpeggiando figuration on the first violin provides the accompaniment. After seven bars marked *Larghetto espressivo*, the concluding *Allegretto agitato* reaffirms F minor, but its coda switches abruptly to F major, and provides a brilliant conclusion, diametrically opposed to the persistent severity of the work.

QUARTET No. 2, Op. 17

BARTOK

Moderato

Allegro molto capriccioso

Lento

Bartok composed his second string quartet between 1915 and 1917 when he was in his mid-thirties. In comparison to the first quartet (1908) this is a fully mature, idiomatic work. No definite key can be assigned to it, but the tonal centre upon which Bartok builds is A.

The first movement, *Moderato*, is in modified sonata form with first and second subject groups which, though well contrasted, share a heightened, expansive lyricism and a common tonality. During the recapitulation, besides considerable extension of thematic elements, there are many gradations of tempo and dynamics, building to a coda of considerable intensity.

The subsequent *Allegro molto capriccioso* is in effect a scherzo in extended rondo form. Its main subject, distinctly folk-like in character, explores juxtapositions of major and minor thirds, and outlines two tritones, intervals that pervade the entire movement. Sforzandi on strong beats only partially serve to offset the ferocity of Bartok's syncopations. A prestissimo section in two simultaneous time-signatures, six against four, leads to a coda in which the four instruments resume in unison their initial fluctuation between major and minor thirds.

The concluding *Lento*, tonally the most elusive movement, is no less intense and uncompromising. In his *Suite* Op. 14, of 1916, Bartok had already made the somewhat unorthodox choice of concluding a work with a slow movement.

INTERMISSION

QUINTET in B minor, Opus 115

BRAHMS

Allegro

Adagio

Andantino — Presto assai, ma con sentimento

Con Moto

Brahms' last four chamber works were all composed between 1891 and 1894 for Richard Mühlfeld who was first clarinetist both in the Meiningen court orchestra and at the Bayreuth festivals. Brahms first heard him in March 1891 and by the end of the summer he had completed the trio, op. 114 and the quintet, op. 115. The first performance of the quintet was given on December 12th when it was most enthusiastically received, the *Adagio* being encored. Though written specifically for a virtuoso, it is interesting to see how fully the clarinet is a part of the ensemble texture, rather than a soloist with accompaniment, the exception being in the aforementioned *Adagio*.

The sonata form *Allegro* opens with a sixteenth-note figure that forms a motto to the work, reappearing in the finale. Besides three distinct subject groups, there is much important subsidiary material in this expansive opening movement. In contrast, the *Adagio* (in D major) which follows is built on only one subject, a *cantabile* melody first announced by the clarinet over strings which remain muted throughout the movement. A clarinet cadenza introduces the central section — *Piu lento*. Here the clarinet ornaments the theme, now in B minor, in a series of episodes which with elaborate figurations and dotted rhythms evoke Hungarian gypsy music.

The third movement unites an *Andantino* and a *Presto* by means of thematic material common to both. The finale, marked *Con moto*, is in variation form. There are five variations which, like the theme, consist of two sixteen-bar periods of which the second is repeated. In the variations prominence is given to the 'cello, the first violin and the clarinet in turn. Beginning with the third variation the motto from the first movement is suggested with increasing clarity. It is fully stated in the coda, together with the first movement's principal subject and this coda is itself a variation of the closing bars of the *Allegro*.

Next Event: University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Friday, April 10th, 1970